

**REMARKS**

Claims 1-18 are pending. Claims 1, 9, 17 and 18 are the independent claims and have been amended.

Claims 1, 2, 5, 8-10, 13, 16 and 17 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 over U.S. Patent Publication No. 2003/0059124A1 (Center, Jr.). Claims 3, 4, 11 and 12 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 over Center, Jr. in view of U.S. Patent 6,326,749 (Satonaka et al.). Claims 6, 7, 14, and 15 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 over Center, Jr. in view of U.S. Patent Publication No. 2003/0113002A1 (Philomin et al.). Claim 18 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 over Center, Jr. in view of U.S. Patent 6,526,158 (Goldberg). Applicant submits that amended independent claims are patentable over the cited art for at least the following reasons.

Amended claim 1 is directed to a face metadata generating method of generating metadata related to face information of an image. The face metadata generating method includes: a step of clipping a plurality of different local areas of the image; a step of extracting frequency features for the respective local areas; and a step of projecting feature vectors, which are vectors consisting of the frequency features, onto predefined subspaces using an orthonormal basis matrix; thereby extracting the projected feature vectors of the respective local areas so as to generate the projected feature vectors as face metadata, the subspaces being predefined by basis vectors obtained by previously dividing a component of each basis vector in the basis matrix by the square root of a corresponding eigenvalue.

In amended claim 1 the subspaces are predefined by basis vectors obtained by previously dividing a component of each basis vector in an orthonormal basis matrix by the square root of the corresponding eigenvalue. This amendment is supported at least at page 10, line 12 to page 12, line 2 of the specification. As described on page 11, lines 8-10 of the specification, by virtue of the claimed feature, measuring the Mahalanobis distance between two patterns becomes computationally easier. Of course the claims are not limited to the disclosed embodiments or advantages.

The portion of Center, Jr. cited in the Office Action includes, in the context of reduction of contrast and brightness variation, an equation 18 that has a square root sign,. However, the identified portion of Center, Jr. does not teach or suggest the feature of amended claim 1 in which the subspaces are predefined by basis vectors obtained by previously dividing a component of each basis vector in an orthonormal basis matrix by the square root of the corresponding eigenvalue.

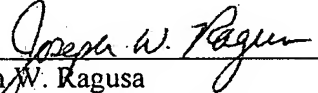
Applicant has found no teaching or suggestion of this feature of amended independent claim 1 in any of Center, Satonaka, Philomin, and Goldberg. For at least this reason, claim 1 is believed patentable over the cited art. The other amended independent claims recite a similar feature and are believed patentable for similar reasons. The dependent claims are patentable for at least the same reasons as their respective base claims.

The above amendments are believed to clearly place this case in condition for allowance and their entry is respectfully requested.

In view of the above amendments and remarks, applicant believes the pending application is in condition for allowance.

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Respectfully submitted,

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